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Black Smiles



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Yours for Smiles,
Franklin Henry Bryant



Black Smiles

or the
Sunny Side of Sable Life
by
Franklin Henry Bryant



Published by
Southern Missionary
Society

NASHVILLE, TENN.

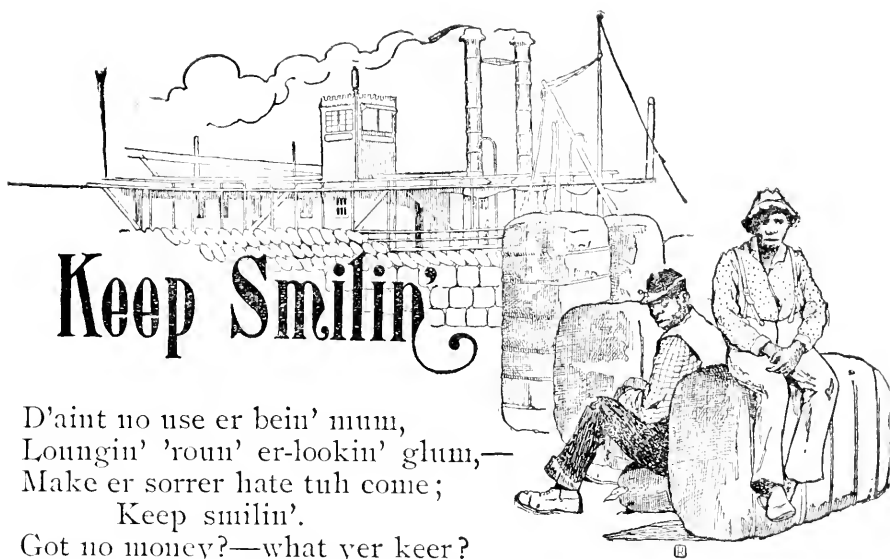
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1909,

By J. E. WHITE.

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©CLARENCE



Keep Smilin'

D'aint no use er bein' mum,
Lounjin' 'roun' er-lookin' glum,—
Make er sorrer hate tuh come;
 Keep smilin'.

Got no money?—what yer keer?
Smile er smile funn ear to ear;
Heaben's happy, don't yer fear;
 Keep smilin', keep smilin'.

Possuus clamin' 'sinmon trees;
White fokes gruntuhs fat iz cheese;
Tu'keys roostin' in duh breeze;
 Keep smilin'.

Niggah, you can't coin er trillion;
Can't you lib on watuhmillion
Big iz Gools n Vanduhbillion?
 Keep smilin', keep smilin'.

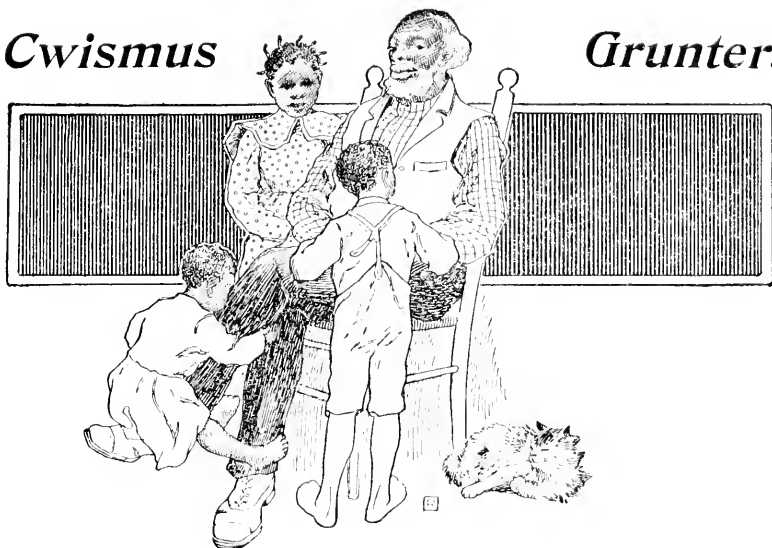
Rudduh be er smiler, min,
Right widout n right widin,
Wif duh tickles 'roun' muh chin,—
 Keep smilin',—

Dan to dribe an automo'
Wid er million tous er woe
Hangin' on muh heaht, you know;
 Keep smilin', keep smilin'!

Grandpa's
Fireside Stories
of Slavery Days
In Six Poems
Being a
Recital of Humorous
Incidents
Characteristic
of
Negro Life
“ Befe’ duh War ”

Cwismus

Grunter.



Well, hit's neahly Cwismus, younguns, n I s'pose you
want tuh hear

Gramper 'late a Cwismus story; so each feller git his
cheer.

An' of co'se now, Sal Malindy wants tuh ride on gram-
per's shoe,

N if she'll be quite an' pooty, she'll be gramper's sugar-
doo!

Now it come about one Cwismus, Mandy says 'twas
fifty-fo',

Dat ole massa's crew er niggul's axshilly tried dem-
selves, yer know.

Jeems hid stole er poun' er backker, n ole A'nt Mer-
liney Wess

Toted off er ham n bacon fum ole massa's in huh dress.

Well, I can't begin to tell yuh what dem darkies didn't stole;

But ole massa couldn't kotch 'em dough dey wus audacious bol'.

Mas' thought, dough, dit he'd git even; so he simply helt his bref,

'Termined whin he kotch er nigguh,
he would beat him ha'f tuh def.



Now ole Pete wuz "hoodoo docktur"
on ole massa's place, you see,
N he claimed dit he could cunger
white n black n bon' n free.

Graveya'd dirt, n rooster spurs, n,—
shucks, I don't know what all
Pete

Didn't fix up fur us niggus,—hands,
n jacks, n rabbit feet!

Howsomeber, all dim darkies what
had one er Peter's things,
Would outrun duh dogs n massa lak
iz if dey went on wings.

Stealin' now wuz nachly timplin, iz
der craps wuz out n froo,

No mo' work twill Febberwary, him
hit neahly Cwismus, too!

Now hit happened Cwismus Eve night wuz er drizzlin',
freezin' cole,

Hin yuh know, I knowed ole massa would be curled up
in his hole.
Hince hit fell out so dit Peter, who wuz awllus mighty
hunter,
Wokes me up twixt twelb n 'leben' axed me how'd I lak
some grunter!

Whin dat niggulh mentioned grunter, Mandy riz up dare
in bed,
'Sistes me in boots and briches. "Ready dreckly,
Petes," I said.
Mandy fixed duh pots n vessels; all duh chilluns wuz
awoke
An' wuz 'joicin' to see daddy gwine tuh git some Cwis-
mus poke.

Got my rabbit foot, an Peter s'plied me wif a special
hand,
Made to fit dis axshil 'casion,—piece er flannel full er
sand.
Peter had er flint n pine tawch,—Petes wus 'fesshuul in
dis sin;
See, he knowed we need dat tawch tuh blind duh
grunters in duh pen.

Now, ole massa wuz er 'spectin' sunppun nudder to
come 'bout,
N whin we got to his pen, suh, ever grunter wuz turned
out!

But ole Peter says, "By gummy! Squeeze yuh rabbit foot," says he,
 "N jis spit upon dat flannel, n come on n foller me."

In a minit we wuz stau'in' 'fo ole massa's front-yard gate;

Dare ole Peter works his jack, n whistle low,
 n din we wait

Jis er secon', n ole Rovuh, massa's big ole
 nigger-hound,

Walks up jis iz nice n gintly, n he stood dare
 friskin' round!

Din ole Peter led right on in to ole massa's
 garden, where

D' wuz er box off in one cawnur, n er fine
 young grunter dare,

Which ole massa wuz er 'zervin' 'tickly
 fer his New Year's Day,

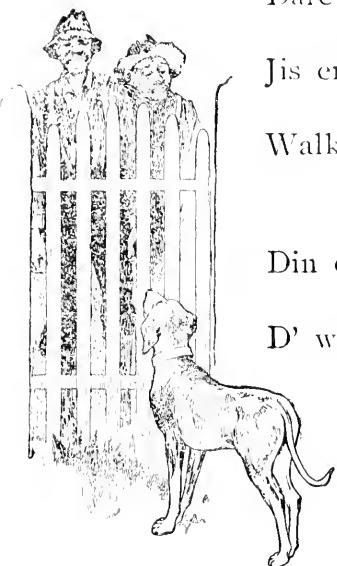
Whin dey wuz er 'spectin' cumpny,
 some big folks fum fur away.

"Hit him centur!" says ole Peter, iz he blinds him wid
 duh light;

N I raised ole massa's ax up, n I nailed him wid my
 might.

But he squeal once, spite er hebens! Chile, I stabbed
 him in duh th'roat,

Picked him up, n law, sich runnin',— me n Peter n dat
 shoat!





I wuz leadin' wif duh grunter, pintly flyin' 'cross duh
yard,
Follered by ole cunger Peter,—man, I wuz er runnin'
hard,—
Whin ole missus' blamed ole clothes-line cot me right
beneaf duh chin,
N hit lak tuh jurked muh head off; folks' hit snatched
me out er win'.

Hin hit flung me, liebens honey! Slap ergainst
ole Peter, too!
Dare us nigguhs n dat grunter had er mash n
smash for true.
N ole mas' n miss' come runnin', wif duh
cow-hide, light, n gun,
'Fo' we riz;—n what you reckon dat dare
pleggone Peter done?

He jis grabbed me in duh collar, n he
helt me to duh groun',
N he holluhed, "Run quick, massa! I
done got duh skawnul down!"
Mas' n miss', bofe in deyr night-clothes,
comes er runnin', n dey say,
"Hole 'im, Peter! Blame duh debil! 'Turn him ovuh
right away."

Folks, ole Peter bent me ovuh dat dare carcus of er hog,
While ole massa wif dat cow-hide evuhlastin' walked
my log!



Yas suh; dat ole white man stood dare, n he beat n
beat, by gum;
Plum furgot dit he wuz freezin' twil duh fros' hid
made him numb!

Well, he had to quit ur freeze one; so he left ole Pete
duh light;
Tole him dat duh tail n intruls wuz his 'ward fur actin'
right!
N tuh see I skint n gutted, cut n hung dat grunter up;
N ole missus stept n brought him pint er wine out in er
cup!

Well, I skint n clean duh hog, n din I cuts him up also;
N I begs while I'm er cuttin', Pete tuh hang it up, you
know,
In duh smoke-house,—n ole Peter couldn't stan' tuh
heah me beg,
N I beat him out dim intruls! Pored um down my
briches-leg!

I jis laid it all on Rovuh, stanin' lickin' in duh pan!
N I left ole Petes a-cussin', wif er jack out in his han'.
I went home! Duh chaps n Mandy, heah dey all come,
gethern me;
Says she, "Sam, you smells lak grunter, but no sign
er poke I see!"

"Johnny," says I, "pull diss boot off. You pull disun,
Sally Ann.

Jules Mariar, come 'ere quick, gal; bring yuh poppy
dat dare pan."

Jules Mariar fotch duh pan dare; John n Sal bofe made
er pull;

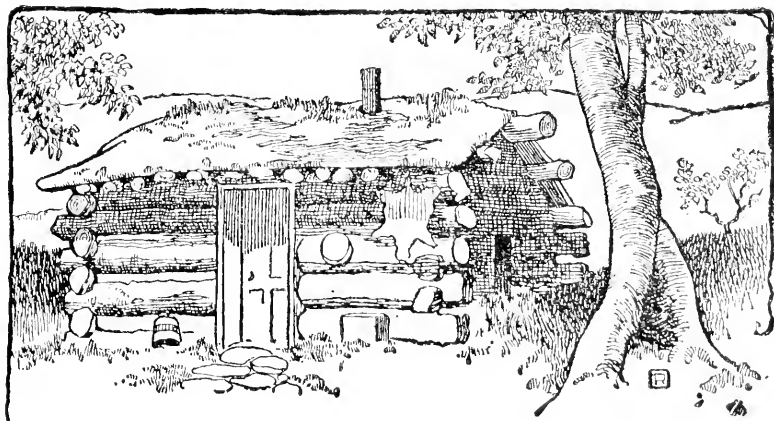
Off dem boots come, n dem chittlins haxshilly filled
dat dish-pan full!

Mandy fell right in dare on um, n duh chilluns couldn't
speak.

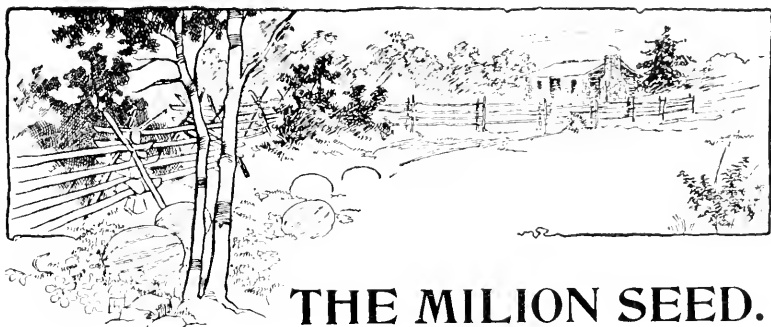
Bless duh Lamb! duh dad done brought um Cwismus
nuff tuh last er week!

Law, dim hashlits n dim chittlins. Dough I did hab to
be beat.

I hid rudduh had dim chittlins dan tuh been ole hoodoo
Pete!







THE MILION SEED.

Well now, little Sal Malindy, you can sit on granper's
knee ;

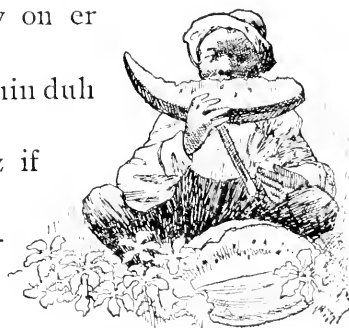
N duh res' er all you younguns, you jis lis'n heah to me;
N I'll tell you all a story, showin' how it awllus pays
To be hones' n be trufeful, by a tale fum slav'ry days.

Now dis 'curred way down in Jawgy on er
sunmuh night in June,

Whin duh milions wuz er-ripenin', whin duh
nights wuz dahk er moon.

Yes, duh time I riccomembers well iz if
'twuz yistuhday;

But it happened long befo' yuh gram-
per's wool hid gotten gray.



Well, iz we hid worked lak good
folks, all duh craps wuz done laid by,
Massa lets us hab er 'vival, niggus come fum fur n
nigh.

Dare it chu'ch we'd hab our preachin', settin' souls fum
Satan free,
N we'd stay twill neahly midnight, n jis hab er juberlee.

Now, not fur off fum duh big house, n right clost berside
duh road,

Wuz ole massa's watuhmilions,—n dey
wuz duh bis dit growed!

N, of co'se, 'twuz hewmun na-
chur,—well, it mout er been
ole Scratch,

Dat one dahk night aftuh meet-
in' brought me to dat milion
patch.

Now it seems some udduh sin-
nuh had been monkeyin'
roun' dem vines,

N ole massa, he done seed it by
duh seeds n impty rines;

N so, on dis ticklur evenin' he
done gone dar wid his gun,

'Termined dat if any nigguh
come dat night, he'd hab some fun!



Of dis fac' I wuz in ignunee! But duh Lawd am good
a heap,

Faw He knowed I sho wuz hongry, n He put ole mas'
a sleep.

N my moufe wuz jis er watern, slobbuhs runnin' down
 my chin,
 Iz I felt about, er-thumpin', fer a good one to begin.

Well I run upon er small one,—jis erbout so big, you
 know ;

Brought muh hammuh up erginst it,
 n right inter hit I go.

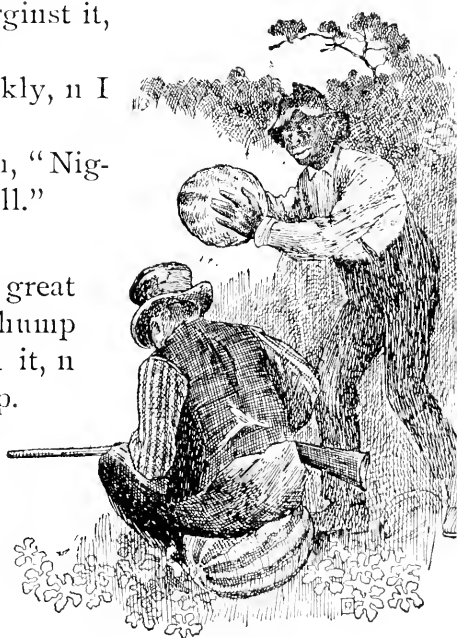
N hit all hid vanished dreckly, n I
 wuz is hongry still ;

But says I unto muhse'f din, "Nig-
 guh, stay n eat yo' fill."

So I hunted 'bout n foun' er great
 big feller which did thump
 Nachly right, n off I jurked it, n
 begin to hunt er stump.

Well, right off er little dis-
 tunce, de ole debil
 he'p me foun' it,

Up I walks n raise muh mil-
 ion, n upon duh stump
 I poun' it.



Lawd er mussy! Up dat stump riz, whin dat milion
 fell, n whoo!

Y' orter seed me straighten out, boys ; bless yer soul, I
 nachly flew!

Faw dat "stump" wuz my ole maasa! Lef' his gun, n
 he to' out

One way home n me ernudduh. What you reckon
come erbout?

Me n him met up tergedduh jis er few feet fum duh gate,
N he knowed me, kaze he holluhed, "Hay dare, Sambo,
blame you, wait!"

"'Stat you, massa?" says I p'litely.

"Yas, hit's me." His flint he
scrach,

Lit er candle right dare on me: "You
been in my milion patch."

"Lawzee, massa!" sclaims I loudly.

"Hush!" he raise his han' n
said;

Hooked me in duh neck n spenders n
straight in duh big house led;

Stuck me right befo' his bureau, hel'
duh candle up, n law!

Dare I wuz er stan'in' lookin' hat er
seed heah on muh jaw!



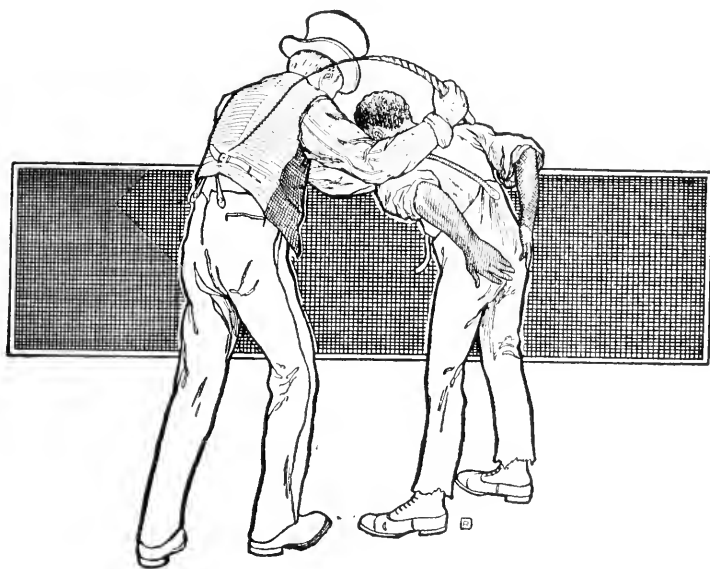
'Twa'n't no use to do no lyin'; I jis had to shet my
moufe.

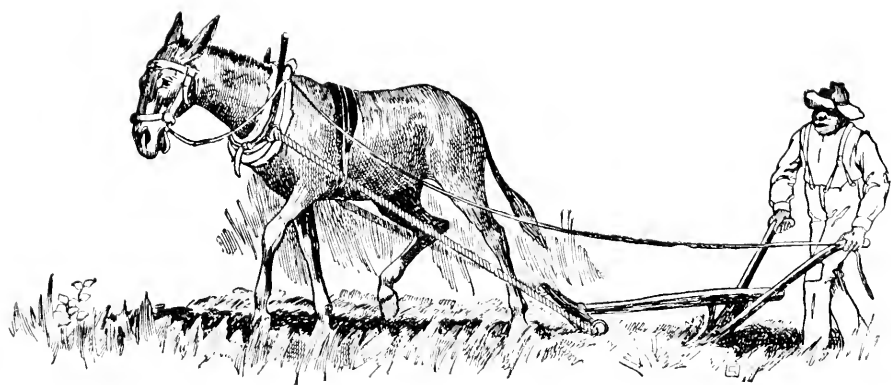
Massa reached up fer his cowlhide, n 'twuz wahm fuh
me down Soufe

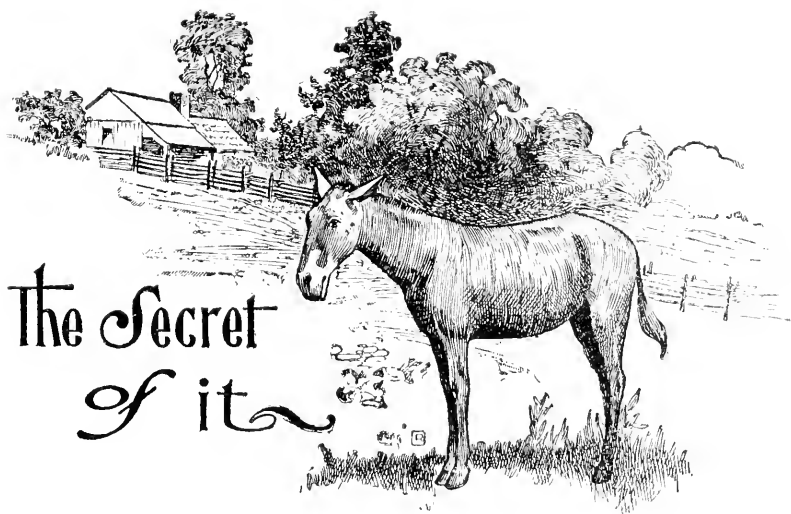
'Fo' he tuhned me loose, I tell yer; n he nachly fixed
me so

Dat I had no inclernations tawdz dat milion patch no
mo'.

But furevuh aftuh, chilluns, whin duh cowhide wuz
furgot,
Dare wuz one thing I remembu'd,—deep down in my
soul it's sot;
Faw whinevuh Satan timps me, wid er mean, dishones'
deed,
I kin look right in dat burean, n behol' dat milion seed!



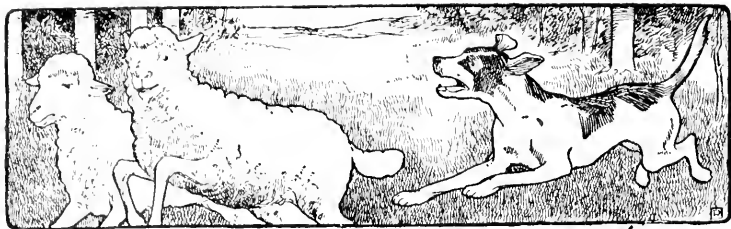




The Secret of it

What keep duh guberment er-gwine?
What keeps dim enguns puffin' ?
(What keeps duh white folks all fum dyin' ?
What s'plies um wid deyr stuffin' ?
What keeps duh wurl up in deys fis ?
How come dey ride n rule ?
Duh secrit of it all am dis :
Duh nigguh n duh mule !

Semehow duh nigguh n duh mule
Inclines tuh hang tuhgedduh ;
You can't tell which duh bigges' fool.—
But, bud, I'm doubtin' whedduh
Ole Dixon Lan' whar I wuz bawn
Would 'mount tuh ha'f er chigguh,
If all duh mules wuz dead n gawn
To heaben wid duh nigguh.



“SHAGGY.”

All right, chilluns; git 'roun' granper; Lindy, clam
up in my lap.
All git quite, n den I'll tell yuh how I had a sad
mishap
In duh days of antebellum, which yuh know means
slav'ry time,
'Fo' duh niggers had deyr freedom;—y'all are ignunt
of duh crime.

Massa had a lot er sheep now, n some dog wuz awllus
roun',
N would be er-killin muttuns;—mas', dough could'nt
kill duh houn'.
So one day whin he was 'turnin', habin' made er wild-
goose-chase,
He sends word down to muh cabin to come up dare to
his place.

Co'se I went, n says he, "Sambo, I's done run, n run,
n run,
Tryin' to git dat pledged cur dog in duh reach er dis
here gun.
Now, I'm gwine tuh simply trus' you wid dis weepou
dit you see;—
Git each dog, n yo's duh mutton, all 'cep'
one good piece fer me."

Well suh, chilluns, you kin 'majun,
maybe, how big gramper felt
Wid dat muskit,—shot n powder hawus
er-hangin' fum muh belt.
"Yas, suh, massa!" Y' orter hurd me,—
O, I'd riz up in duh sky!
So I watched n so I waited fer dat dog
dit wisht tuh die.

Seemed like dough dit somehow 'nudduh
dat ole dog jis wouldn't come
Back n kill ernudduh mutton,—Lawd, I
wuz er-wantin some!
But dat skawnul stayed erway, suh;—
well, I most wuz in despair,
Whin er thought popped froo muh noggin, n hit
he'ped me, I declare.

Now, I had er dog name "Shaggy," n he wa'n't no
count at all,—

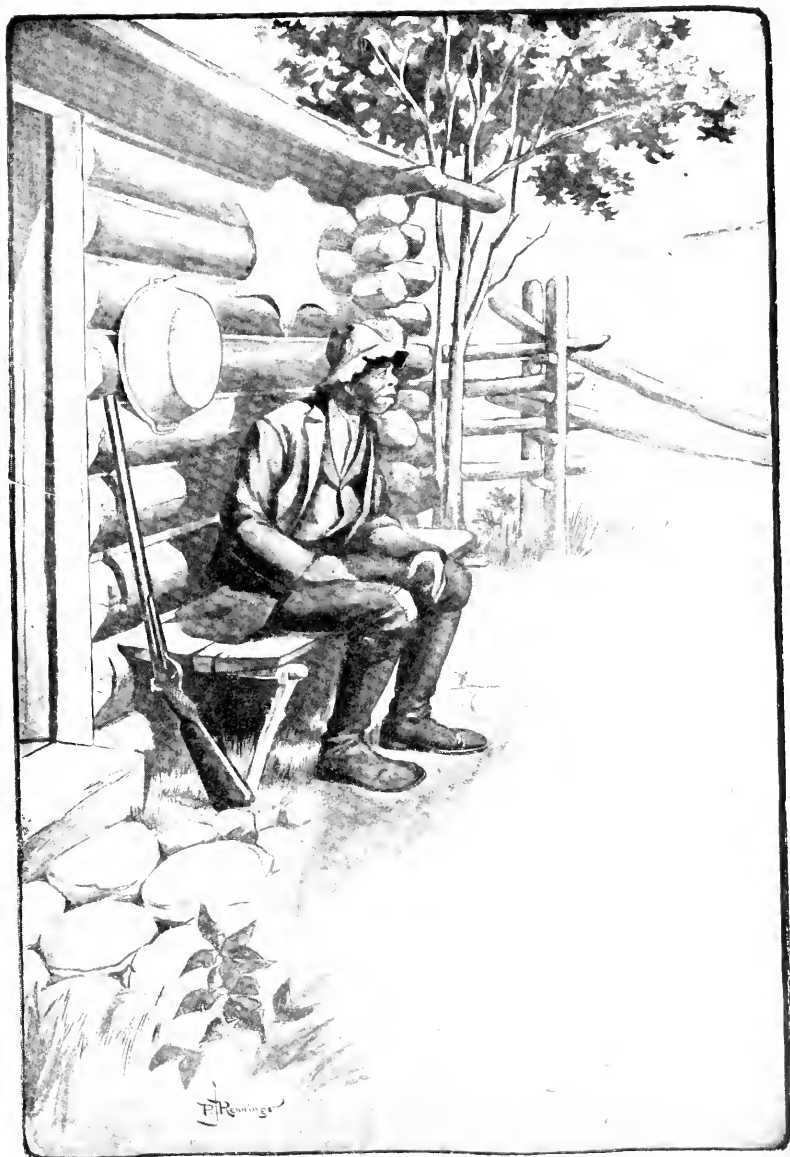


Kep' him tied up roun duh house dare, so he'd 'scape
 ole massa's ball,
 Kaze he'd nachly nail er mutton evuh day if he wuz
 loose,—
 D'wa'n't no houn' erbout could beat him, faw he
 axshilly beat duh doose.

So upon er Sundy mawnin', whin I'd waited fer a
 week,
 I gits up n turns ole Shaggy loose to go an' mutton
 seek;
 Off he go, his tail er-danglin', down eroun' der hill he
 creep;—
 "Go on, dog," says I unto him, "Yon go out n slew er
 sheep."

Ha'f er hour, ur little later,—co'se I wuz der paster
 eyein',—
 N what seed I but duh muttons, n ole Shaggy, jis er
 flyin',!
 "Put duh kittle on dare, Mandy," says I untuh gram-
 mer whin
 Me n massa's big ole muskit hit duh road n split duh
 win'.

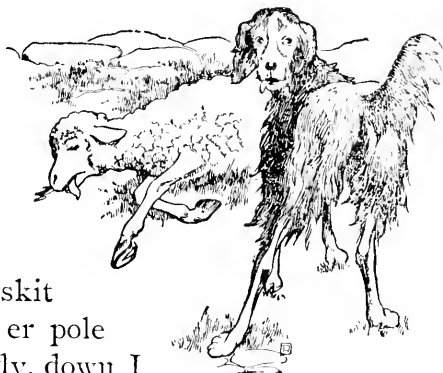
Whin I got down in duh hollow, dare ole Shaggy stood,
 yuh know,
 Pantin' 'bove er big fine mutton dat duh skawnul done
 laid low.—



"G'way fum dare' you grand ole rascal,"—bless yuh,
 Shaggy's tushes bloom,
 N he bristles up dare to me,—but I raised dat gun,
 "Cur-boom!"

Well, dat settled it wid Shaggy;
 I jis hauled him
 by duh sash
 Little piece off fum duh mut-
 ton, lef' him dare fuh
 buzzard hash.

'Gainst er tree I lent duh muskit
 Whilst I cut me down er pole
 So's to tote muh mutton handy, down I
 retched tuh take erhol',—



Whin, I 'clare tuh goodness gwacious, up dat blame'd
 ole mutton rose,
 Froo duh briars hit went er-flyin'! but right aftuh hit
 I goes.
 Hebens, chilluns! y'orter seed us sail froo stumps n
 briars n ditches,—
 Los' muh hat n to' muh coat off, n suh, outrunned
 boots n briches!

Heah dat mutton went, n me too, up in down all n dat
 holler,—
 Hit seemed 'termined to be leader,—I wuz 'termined I
 would foller!

Well, I koteh it;—got duh booger;—drawed muh
knife ercross hits thoat.

Went on back n foun' muh briches n some pieces of
muh coat.

I fuhgot erbout duh muskit,—hit had done no good
tuh me,—

Shouldered up muh big ole mutton;—muskit settin'
side er tree.

Well, ole massa watched n waited, wonderu why I didn't
come

Right on up dare to duh big house n gib him n missus
some!

Finely, he got tired er-waitin', so he walks on down to
where

He had seed me stan' n shoot at;—foun' his gun n
Shaggy dare!

Picked it up n pulled his knife out, n cut off ole
Shaggy's tail,

Car'ed it on back tu duh big house,—waitin' dare iz
mad iz hail!

Dreckly, up I comes er-steppin', wif er quarter dat wuz
prime!

Walked right on up in duh big house,—proudes' nigger
of duh time!

“Mawnin', massa!” Y'orter seed me bow n do duh
curtsey hop,—

"Thought berhaps dit you n missus mought enjoy
some mutton chop!"

Dar ole massa sot iz stunly,—diden't eben crack er
grin!

"Come 'ere, nigguh," said he huffly; missus took duh
mutton din,



N went on out to duh kitchen n lef' me in dare wid
him,—

Up he retched behind duh bureau fer his cowhide, keen
n slim.

"Whar my gun, suh?" "Hit's at home, mas'!"

"Yes hit is, fer dat's hit dare!"

Hin he wahnmed me, laws er mussy! wahnmed me up
fum heels to hair!

But I would'nt er mount duh wahmin',—dough 'twuz
hot iz brimstone hail,
If he hadn't to my briches sewed ole Shaggy's bushy
tail!

Wif dat thing er-hangin' 'hind me, all dat whole long
summuh froo;—
E'vuhbody called me, "Shaggy"! n I had to take it,
too.
Well, I knows you chaps is weary; so now, off to roost
n sleep;—
Don't you nevuh dough furgit duh two-legged dog dat
kilt duh sheep.





In days gon' by

Well, the younguns all er-snorin', so's dey'r dad n
mammie too;

Ebry livin' soul am sleepin', Mandy, 'cepin' me n you.
An' you hand me Sal Malindy, she kin sleep in gram-
per's arms;

N jis draw yer cheer up closter, so I kin review your
charms.

Lub, duh frosts er time am white on ebry stran' n lock
er hair,

N duh years have penned dey'r 'pistles in dat face once
young n fair;

N duh light no mo' am sparklin' lak duh sunshine in
yer eyes,

Which by faif am eamly lookin' tawdz duh mansions in
duh skies.

An' yo' cheeks hab lost duh roses which in young days
use to bloom:

N my head lak yours is blossomed fer duh crown beyan'
duh tomb.

Mandy, little Sal Malindy is duh very spit of you
When we met n loved n married, way back dare in fifty-
two.

N duh dogwood tree am standin' down duh hill dare by
duh spring,

Where we use to do our courtin', where we use to lub n
sing,

N dat May-night when we married, missus spread a
bankit dare,—

N if happy makes er angel, on dat night we wuz a pair.

I's been settin' here er-spellin' in duh Gospul writ by
John,

In duh place where our ole missus use to lub to dwell
upon:

"In my Father's house are many, many mausions, n
I go

To prepare a place dare fer you,—” dat's duh most she
read, you know.

N while thinkin' on dat Scripsher, mas' n mis' comes
back to me,

N I sees um jis iz nachul iz in life day use to be.

Our ole massa,—wa'n't he 'culiar? Yit he wuz er good
ole man,

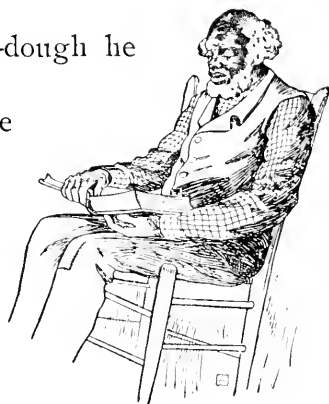
N I bleaves iz you do, Mandy, dat he'll reach duh better
lan'.

One thing makes me lub ole massa,—dough he
used to put me froo,—

He was kiind to all our younguns, n he
wuz so good to you.

Nebber in my life, n' I knowed him
clean down twill he taken sick,

Did he eber on er ohman lay er single
angry lick.



N he neber sol' er nigguh; n whin one
would run erway,

He would git no dogs to ketch him;—down unto his
dyin' day

Our ole massa thought it sinful thus to treat er helpless
slave;—

N I have to love him fer it, dough to-night he's in his
grave.

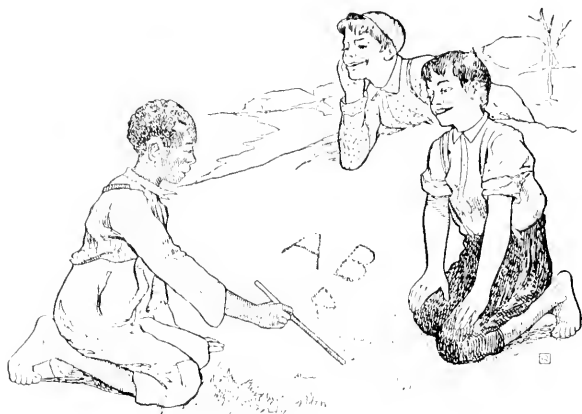
An' you know I larned to read n write er ha'f-way
decent han':—

Co'se I'se told you how I larnt it: John n Henry in
duh san'

When we'd go er swimmin' Sundays, dey would make
duh alphabit,

N I'd try tuh make duh letters, n dey'd laf twill fit to
split.

Well, dey kep' er-foolin' wid me, n I tried wid all my
might,
Twill it happened Mr. Sambo got duh gif' to read n
write.



Whin at last ole massa koted me, Lawd, it spoilt his
earthly joys;
Co'se I had to name my teachers, n I tole him,—'twuz
his boys!

Chile, you know I thought duh cowhide would in wraf
on me descen';
But ole massa tuk my han', n spoke to me iz frin' to
frin';
Splained to me how 'twould be dang'us fer duh fac' to
become known,
Axed fer his sake n muh own sake dat I'd leab duh ink
alone.

Co'se dat wuz in time er slav'ry, n I wuzn't awllus good;—

Well, I don't spoze dat er darkey in dim days jis reely could

Be iz good iz Christians orte; faw his youngsturs bound tuh eat,—

Which accounts fer stolen muttons, n my scrapes wid Hoodoo Pete.

When er feller gits er wife n chilluns nuff to number nine,—

Wif deyr stomachs awllus heavy, awllus heavy on deyr min',—

Hit's no easy job to feed um! Howsomever, you n Sam

Stood in wid ole massa's bacons;—us wuz def upon his ham!

But der Lawd is up in heaven, n ole mas' is in der ground,

N I ax muh Lawd n Sabeieur, if er-gains' duh dead be found

Any sin ur wrong by Sambo,—mutton, grunter, ur what not,—

Dat He'll please duh sin forgive me, n fum out duh Record blot.



You remimber well iz I do, dat po' ohman, Sindy May
Wid her pooty little baby,—how she tried to git erway

I'm duh State er Alerbamer, way back dare in fifty-three,—

Tried ter reach duh Queen's Dominions, where der people all wuz free.



N you 'mimbur, lub, you
liut her dat dare bran'
new wusted skirt,
Which I bought you fer yo'
birfday, n my flannel
Sunday shirt,

You cut up n made her baby,
—little helpless, hongry
thing,—

Made duh little chumper wrapper,
which we fixed on wid er
string.

N I helped her out er Jawgy on
her way to Nawf Ca'line;
Run all night, n got back home,
suh, broad daylight, 'bout
eight ur nine;

N I 'scaped, faw hit wuz rainin';
but had hardly made it back
When we heard duh bloodhounds yelpin', hard n fas'
upon her track!

I kin see her iz dey brought her, right befo' our cabin
do',

Wif her little, bloody baby, which duh hounds had kilt,
 you know;
 N I still kin hear her screamin', iz dey driv her 'long
 duh road,
 Bleedin' lak er beef, n naked, faw duh hounds no murey
 showed.

Say, she wuz a pooty critter, wid dat long, black wavin'
 hair
 Floatin' all eroun' her body, in dat col' Novimber air!
 N it seems dat God in pity stretched duh clouds ercross
 duh sky,
 So dim beas'ly, cruel humans moutn't see His angels
 cry.



Iz dey driv her by duh big house, mas'
 wuz stan'in' at duh gate,—
 I wuz follerin' 'hind duh drivers, hince I
 heard him tell um, "Wait!"
 Run his right han' down his pocket, n
 pulls up er sack er gol',—
 Counted out two hundred dollars. Missus
 took dat bleedin' soul,

Turned duh kiver on her bed, sul;—n her face wuz
 wet wid tears,
 Iz she stood by dyin' Sindy, in whose life n tender
 years
 Dare wuz only shame n sorrer, wid no one to take her
 part

'Twill 'twuz too late;—n ole missus,—chile, we thought
'twould break her heart!

Well, I guess we'll change duh subjics; see yo' cheeks
n mine is wet;

Our ole mas' n mis' n Sindy, all done paid duh final
debt;

N it soon will be our time to pass away n be at rest,—
“Peaceful rest,” so runs duh poet, n “its waking
s'premely blest.”

Din dare come duh great Rebellion, hin hit's awllus
seemed to me

Dat dat war wuz sent perposely fer to set duh niggus
free.

Seems duh Lawd got tired er waitin', hearin' argermints
er men,

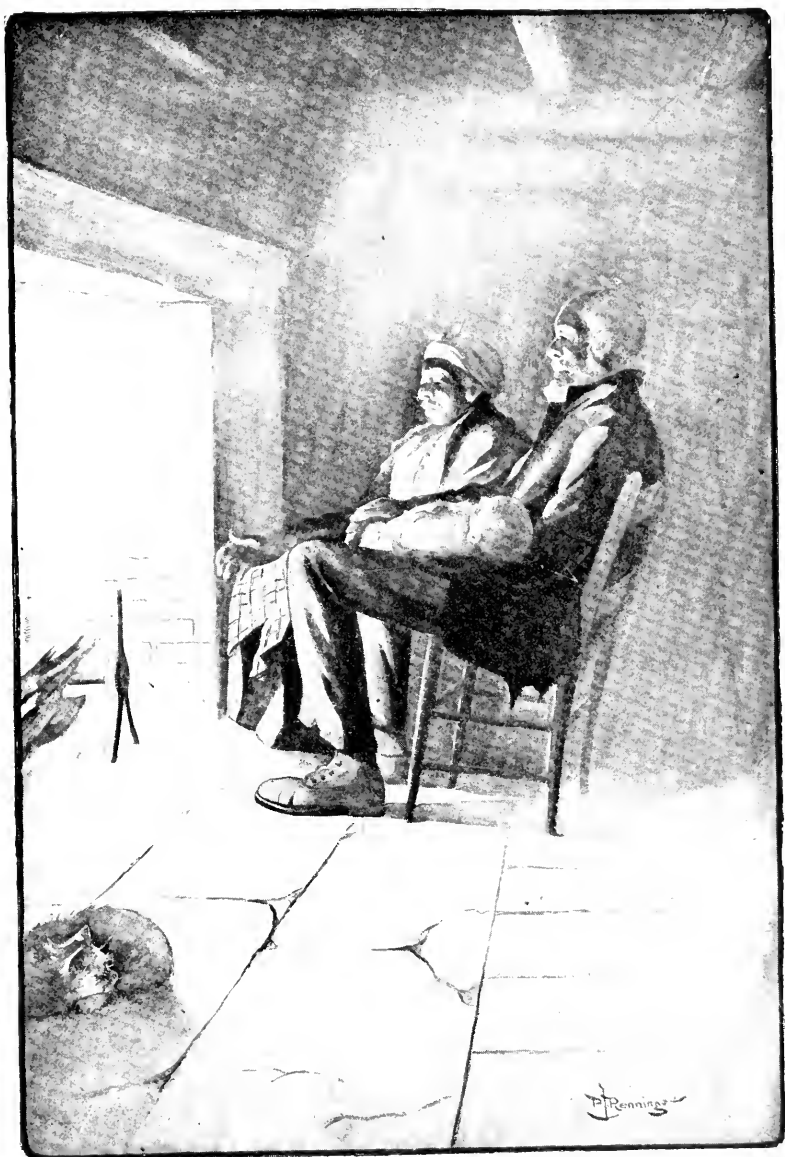
N jis raised up grand ole Lincoln fer to wipe erway duh
sin.

N you know dit John n Henry, all din chilluns massa
had,—

John wuz eberything to missus, Henry, all unto his
dad,—

Went n jine duh 'Fedrit forces, spite er all deyr folks
could do;—

N poor John wuz kilt at Shiloh, sixdth of Apuril, sixty-
two.



Henry fell at Chickermawger, tawdz duh close of sixty-three;

N whin it wuz told to massa, "Now I longs tuh die," says he.—

Well, ole missus died dat Cwisumus; you wuz stan'in' by her side,

Kaze I mimbur how you tole me dat she lak some angel died.

Din ole massa left duh big house,—said 'twuz lonesome ober dare;

Said he'd rudder share our cabin, if we had er room ter spare.

So we squeez ourse'ves up closter,—n hit wuz dis very room

Where he lived fum dat time onwuds, twill we cared him to duh tomb.

You remimber whin duh Yankees come along in sixty-fo'

Dat ole mas' wuz on his def-bed,—hit set right dare by dat do'.

Whin dat 'bellion first wuz started, he wuz rich iz any man;

Whin he died he didn't own er single thing excep' his lan'.



Whin duh Yankees come, dey stripped him; burnt duh big house to duh groun':

Took duh hogs n cows n hosses;—eberything he had
dey foun'.

Co'se hit went to scrush duh 'bellion;—hin duh darkies
up n lef'

Wid duh army, all excep'in' Pete n Mandy n myse'f.

I wuz glad dey scrushed duh 'bellion;—to duh victor
b'longed duh spoil;

But it hurt me, chile, to see um 'stroy so many years
er toil,

N to see um burn duh big house: dar wuz nuffin else
so dear

Unto us, excep' dis cabin,—dear ole cabin! hit's still
here.

Whin dey lef', ole massa called me, n I went n tuk his
han';

Says he, "Sam, I see dey lef' you;—wonder if dey lef'
duh lan'?"

"Yas, suh, massa," says I sadly; de ole man wuz layin'
low;

N he says, "Now, Sam, I'm dyin', n dare's one thing
'fo' I go

"Dat I 'zires to leab here wid you." N he pulled dis
Bible out

Fum his piller, wid dis paper, which of co'se you knows
about.—

"Dis my will fer you n Mandy,"—(you wuz somewhere
out-er-do's)—

"Lay me side yo' good ole missus,—all duh Yankees
lef' is yo's;—

"Good bye, Sambo!" Dim duh las' words dat on earfe
he eber said;

Closed his eyes, n 'fo' I knowed it, our ole massa,—he
wuz dead.

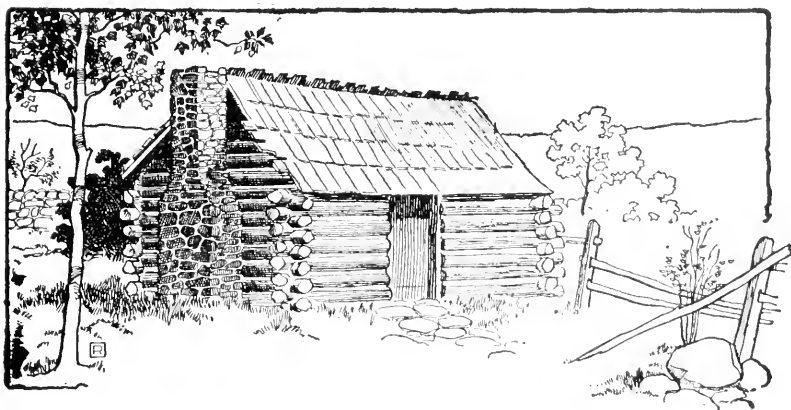
N I kinnot keep fum thinkin', if in heaben bright n fair
Chris' has 'pared a single mansion, mas' n mis' am got
one dare.

An' duh years am fastly flyin'; hain't none lef' but me
n you;

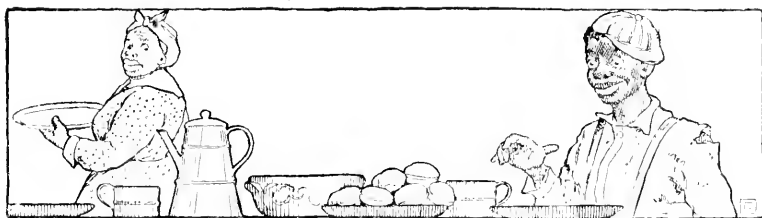
N we soon mus' leave our cabin, n accep' er mansion
too.—

Lis'n here at Sal Malindy,—hain't she mo' din mawtul,
say?

Well, I bleave I's read er Scripsher; so den, Mandy,
s'pose we pray.







“PASS DAT BISKIT.”

Now, befo' we leave duh table, all you youngsters git
plum quite,
Faw I see I'll hab to show you what is wrong n what is
right.
Co'se we kin excuse Malindy; she is gramper's baby
yit;
But hit's time you udder younguns wuz er larnin' little
bit.

I remember whin er youngster, lak you youngsters is
terday,
How my mammie taught me manners in a 'culiar kind
er way.
One er mammie's ole time 'quaintance,—Missus Dooney
wuz her name,—
Wuz one night our mammie's cumpny,—mammie, co'se,
prepared fer same.

Mammie fixed her cookin' vessels; me n Son n little
Sis,

We wuz heppin' 'roun' er-doin' little dat n little dis,
Faw our mammie had duh sifter, n wuz makin' up some
dough,

Which would soon turn inter biskits,—Law
—we all wuz smart, you know.



Faw hit wuzn't custymary whin I wuz er-
comin' up,—er

'Cep' hit wuz whin we had cumpny,—to hab
biskits hot fer supper.

N of co'se, on sich ercasions, mammie'd only
bake er few,

N she nachly 'spec' us younguns to put up
wid one er two.

Now, hit happened whin dim biskits reached
duh table on dat night,

Dat my exercise had s'plied me wif er whalein' appur-
tite!

'Zerves n biskits on duh table! Honey, I could skasely
wait

Fer my mammie to adminstur,—I jis had to pass muh
plate.

N Mis' Dooney,—good ole lady,—fawked er biskit off
fer me;

N she had to keep er-fawkin' twill she'd fawked off one,
two, free:—

Hin hit wuzn't many minutes 'fo' I 'plies fer number
fo';—

Mammie frowns n han' me cold one,—drapped dat
blame thing on duh flo'!

"Hab er biskit' Sister Dooney," mammie said, n I
turned blue,

Iz she shoved der plate up to her, dare wuz only 'main-
in' two.

"Not quite ready, Sister Mandy,"—n she pass duh
plate tuh son;

"In er minit," 'splains Mis' Dooney, "I will
try ernudder one."

I had bit dat ole cold biskit,—tough ernuff to
choke er goat,—

N I don't know how I swallud, but I swallud,
cleared muh th'oat,

N I looks it Missus Dooney, faw I see duh
biskit she's

Workin' on am gettin' scacer: says I, "Pass
duh biskits, please."

Missus Dooney kep' er tawkin', n er munchin'
on her bread;

She n mammie kep' er tawkin', jis iz if I'd nuthin'
said.

"*Pass* der biskits, please ma'am," says I, little louder
din befo';—



Law, you orter seed how mammie frowned up dare,—
jis sorter so.

Missus Dooney nebber heard me,—dat's duh way dat
she let on,—
N her little piece er biskit in er minute would be gone;



N dare wa'n't but one mo' lef', suh;—man, I stretched
up in muh cheer,—
Says I wif muh fawk uplifted, "*Pass dat biskit*, don't yer
hear?!"

Yas suh, chilluns, bet yer money, dat dare biskit come
to me!

"Hab some mo'," says mammie to her. "No, I thank
yer, Sis," says she.

Mammie says, "Jis come in front, din; dain't no use
fer you to wait."

N iz soon iz dey had gone out, 'zerve-dish sot right in
muh plate!

Mammie come on back dare dreckly,—jis iz hot iz bees
n ants;—

Up she hists me funi dat table, n she rolls me out muh
pants,—

Hitched my head up 'twixt her knees, suh, great big
luther strop assisted,

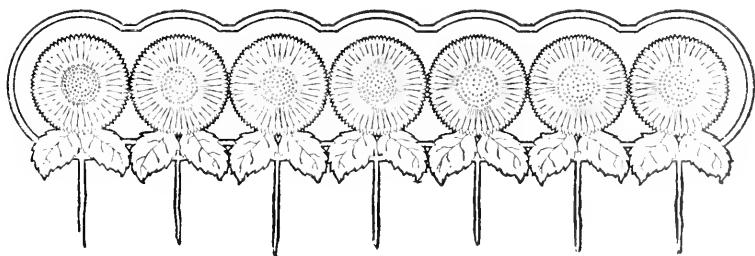
N whin she had 'formed her duty, all dem biskits done
dijisted.

Bet yo' life, I sho' remimbud, youngsturs, evuh aftuh
dat,

Dit whin 'zerves wuz on duh table, dey wuz dare to be
looked at!

N 'bout takin' las' er victuals,—mammie sho' did me
convince

'Fo' I got back in dim briches!—I'se had *manners*
evuh since.







Make ace, younguns; me n grammer wants you to be
still n quite,
N to listen to duh story dat I'm gwine tuh 'late tuh-
night.
Sal Malindy, whar you, honey? Dat's er sweet gal,
come to gramp;—
Well din, go on to yo' grammer, you audacious little
scamp.

Dis wuz in duh days of actions, iz we used to call um
den,
Whin we all b'longed to duh white folks, n wuz slaves
instid er men.
N it wuz 'long in Novimbuh, 'simmon season wuz on
han',
N sweet taters baked wid 'possum wuz duh go in Dixie
Lan'.

N of co'se, you all know 'possum, whin hit's baked
right good n brown,
Wid duh stuffins n duh taters floatin' in duh grease
eroun',
Wif er few red pods er pappah, so's tuh make hit sorter
hot,
Is duh bes' stuff dat er ohman evuh put in pan ur pot.

Now ouh dog, his name wuz Bulljuh,—smartuh dog
hain't wo' er hide,
Faw dat houn' would sho' kotch 'possums,—n I'm sorry
yit he died.
Well, on dis Novimbuh evening, long befo' duh clock
struck eight,
Bulljuh treed, n I goes to him,—great big 'possum,
sho' iz fate!

Up I clamed up 'mungst duh 'simmons, vygrusly I
shook der lim',
Down he come, n good ole Bulljuh butters biskets dare
wid him!
I gets down you know n feel him, hin he wuz jis rollin'
fat;
'Way we went back to duh cabin, skint him 'fo' 'yo'
mought say, Scat!

Mandy had duh pots er bilein' time I got duh 'possum
clean,



N I turned him ovuh to huh, dumped him in duh grub-machine.

N I'll tell yuh, dat dare grammer 'zackly done huh dooty, too;

Whin she fixed er 'possum, sonny, hit wuz cooked now, hin hit's troo.

She wuz on duh whole plantation, bes'
cook on ole massa's place,

N whin she got froo er cookin', done
me good to ax duh grace;

N whin 'possum decked duh table,—
well I'll jis be took n hung

If I wuzn't skeert whin swallow dat I'd
swaller teefs n tongue.



But to 'turn to dis heal 'possum. Sizely
iz duh clock struck nine,

Dat dare booger wuz er-lookin' axshilly,
nachully, 'zackully fine!

"Yas, he done now," grammer says, n
slices off his hams, you know,

Kase we 'greed to treat duh white folks; done it mos'ly
fer a show.

Well, yer grammer got her bonnet, put dem hams upon
er plate,

N went on up to duh big house.—Lawd, I poss'bly
couldn't wait

T'will she come back, so I slip in to duh kitchen,—n
I sware!

Bendin' right above dat 'possum, wuz some feller,
smackin' dare!

Folks, I jis slip right up on him,—jis muh socks on,
co'se you know,—

N I kicked duh skawnul so hard dat I sprained muh lef'
big toe;

Knocked him slap across duh oven settin' dare upon duh
coals,—

Law, I riz him fum dat 'possum! 'Way out in duh flo'
he rolls.

But you mought er seed me lookin', iz ole massa riz up
dare,

N snatched off er piece er scantlin', n begin tuh cuss n
sware!

"Mussey, massa," I 'gin pleadin', "Law, I didn't spoze
'twuz you!"

"Well, you'll spoze 'twuz me, ber golly, by duh time
dit I gits froo."

Oh, he wool me 'roun' dare scan'lous, wif dat piece er
timbuh, chile;

All duh darkies heard me hollern n come runnin' fer er
mile,

But duh lickin didn't hurt me ha'f is much iz I pre-
tended;—

I wuz sholy mort'ly skeert, dough, my probation days
wuz ended.

Well when he got froo er-beatin', off he go upon his
hoss.

Mandy come, n us n Bulljuh made up fer duh time we
loss

Foolin' 'roun' bein' good to white fokes;—evuh 'possum
Bulljuh kitched

Aftuh dat, you bet yer dolluh, white fokes' tushes never
to'ched.

Mandy says, "Sam, ax duh blessin'," iz down to duh
dish we sot,

Kaze dare wuz er plenty 'possum still remainin' in duh
pot.

Says I, "Massa Jesus, please suh, bless dis 'possum fer
ouh sake,

N may dat which mas' n miss' got give um bofe duh
stumuck-ache!"





MOTHER.

Cover's turned and bed is ready, and I'm in my
"nighty" dressed;
"Napper" sends the "gapers" for me, and they lull
me off to rest;
But before I leave for "Dreamland," just before I reach
the bed,
I am kneeling, and my mother's soft, warm hands are
on my head.

“Now I lay me down to sleep,” I hear that mother
gently say,
And repeating what she’d tell me, learned my infant
lips to pray.
Often as I say, “Our Father,” still that mother’s face
I see,
Just as when I was her “tootsy,” with my head upon
her knee.

And when down to sleep I lay me, when my lips in
death be dumb,—
When I sleep that sleep she’s sleeping, till the Prince
of Life shall come;
If I wake to life immortal, and with her bright glory
share,
It will be because that mother’s love is living in that
prayer.



AN ODE TO MOTHER EARTH.

[The inscription of this ode is made to the fairest flower of the GREAT MOTHER
of whom I sing, Daisy.]

Sweet Muse, bequeath my pen thy lasting charm,
Soon shall my lips be dumb, my heart be still.
While life bestows its strength unto my arm,
Grant thou my ink thy living charm to thrill
The souls of men. These words with beauty fill,
That men may pause amidst life's fevered, ruinous rush
And see in Mother Earth thy pictured will.
What blossoms here, forbid that Time should crush
When sleeps my lonely soul in Death's eternal hush.

O Earth, enduring Mother of us all!
How fair, how lovely still thy wondrous face!
Who knows thy years, save God? Who can recall
Time when thy mundane bounds were born to space?
Thou wast thy Maker's bride and formed to grace

His Universe ; Jehovah chose thee for His own ;
Thou left His love, forsook thy Lord's embrace
For Man, thy most unworthy son ; to groan
For him,—vain, wretched worm,—thou queen of heaven's
throne !

For him thy tender, loving bosom bleeds ;
Thy form, once wrapped in Glory's robes, I see
Clad now in rags of woe for Man's misdeeds :
Still down the ages rings thy whispered plea,
“Father, forgive!” What mother's love can be
Like thine, O Dolor Mater ! Millenniums of tears
Have washed thy cheeks ; the scourge of sin on thee
Hath left its scars, and on thy face appears
The furrowed field which Death hath ploughed through
all thy years.

And yet how beautiful thou art, O earth !
How generous in thy grief ! How great !
What beauties to thy bosom owe their birth !
What charms are thine, thou miracle of Fate !
Thy husband is thy God, and on thee wait
Angelic hosts, all armed with bright, celestial steel ;
These guard thy first and glorious estate
Until thy travail end, until thou feel
Our Father's kiss upon thy cheek and wear His seal.

And I have loved thee, Mother Earth ; I'm thine.

Thy soul, thy lot, thy likeness, all I claim ;
Thy fate, thy griefs, thy hopes, thy prayers are mine ;
I love, and own, thy nature and thy name.

May God forbid that e'er a blush of shame
Should kiss the crimson in thy grief-stained cheek

For deed of mine. Be mine the noble aim,
The purpose lofty, pure ; be mine to seek
The secrets of thy joy, and not a sorrow wreak.

Enchanting is thy loveliness in life !

Thy beauteous form in Ocean's ruffled blue
Bespeaks thy royalty, proclaims thee wife
Unto Jehovah, and in all thy sorrows true.

Oft have I thought, as gently to my view
Thou wouldst unfold as unto one beloved thy breast,—
Oft have I thought, and with the thought I grew,
That on thy brow Creation's crown should rest,
Since thou of all the countless worlds art loveliest.

And what is Man, that thou shouldst him regard ?

A wanderer from thy love ; his chosen lot
So often cast in sin ; a heart as hard,
Unfeeling as the stone ; his day a blot
Upon the calendar of Time ; forgot
As soon as sinks his sun ; his friends rejoice to weep

For him in death,—in life they love him not.
Thy love endures: back to thy arms we creep,
Sad wrecks of sin, and rest in thy beloved sleep.

The guiltiest thy heart forgives and spreads,
The lovely mantle of forgetfulness
Above the deeds of shame that crown our heads,
Above our sins, too dark to e'en to God confess.
Such monumental love no words express,
No bosom save thy own couldst bear. Without a dream
To tincture guilt with well-deserved distress;
Devoid of hope, if Justice be supreme;
We sleep, whilst pleads thy living love, "O God, re-
deem!"

And soon shall dawn thy morn of restoration.
For thee the tender heart of God doth yearn;
Thou'lt share with Him, the Sovereign of creation,
The gifts which love for Man didst make thee spurn.
Thy God shall come to thee; and thy return
To favor with thy Lord will wake to ecstasy
The dwellers of the universe; they shall discern
When thou shalt mount thy pristine throne to be
Queen with thy God, what love was thine, and envy
thee.

Expectant Earth, when folded in thy breast,—
When I shall sleep with all thy children dead,—

When Death, thy silent messenger of rest,
Shall raise thy flag of truce above my head ;
I hope to wake enraptured from my bed
To see thee crowned, to see thee robed in golden flame,
To hear from angels' lips the summons read
That welcomes thee to God. I hope to claim
A sweeter tongue to sing the love that crowns thy
name.



The Ninety and Nine.

BY PAUL, DUNBAR.

Po' lil' brack sheep that strayed away,
Done los' in de win' an' de rain,
An' de Shepherd He say, "O hirelin',
Go fin' My sheep again."
An' de hirelin' say, "O Shepherd,
Dat sheep am brack and bad."
But de Shepherd He smile, like dat lil' brack sheep
Wuz de onliest lamb He had.

An' He say, "O hirelin', hasten,
For de win' an' the rain am col',
An' dat lil' brack sheep am lonesome
Out dere, so far f'um de fol'."
But de hirelin' frown, "O Shepherd,
Dat sheep am ol' an' gray;"
But de Shepherd He smile, like dat lil' brack sheep
Wuz fair as de break o' day.

An' He say, "O hirelin', hasten,
Lo, here is de ninety an' nine,
But dere way off f'um de sheepfol',
Is dat lil' brack sheep o' Mine!"
And de hirelin' frown, "O Shepherd,
De res' o' de sheep am here!"
But de Shepherd He smile, like dat lil' brack sheep
He hol' it de mostes' dear.

An' de Shepherd go out in de darkness
Where de night was col' and bleak,
An' dat lil' brack sheep He fin' it,
An' lay it agains' His cheek.
An' de hirelin' frown, "O Shepherd,
Don' bring dat sheep to me!"
But de Shepherd He smile, an' He hol' it close,
An' dat lil' brack sheep—wuz—me!

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